

TITLE

A
L E T T E R
T O T H E
D E A N
O F
B R I S T O L.

LETTER



BRISTOL

TITLE 2.

A
L E T T E R
T O T H E
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B R I S T O L.

O C C A S I O N E D

By his new Edition of the Second Volume
of his Divine Legation of Moses.

By HENRY STEBBING, D. D. Chancellor
of the Diocese of Sarum.

-----Seu me tranquilla senectus
Expectat; Seu mors atris circumvolat alis;
Dives, inops, ROMÆ, seu fors ita jusserit, EXSUL;
Quisquis erit vitæ, SCRIBAM, color.-----

Horat. Sat. 2. 1.

L O N D O N :

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MDCCLIX.

LETTER

TO THE

DEAN

BRISTOL



By Henry Street, Bristol

DONOR

Printed by J. D. ...

...

...

TO THE
DEAN
OF
BRISTOL.

MR. DEAN,



PON the Publication of a new Edition of your DIVINE LEGATION; I was naturally led to look into it; to see if your after-reflections had thrown any new light upon the Subject which, some Years ago, was a matter of Contest between us: Not with Intention to revive old Disputes, but with a desire to correct my former Judgment, if, in any material Instance, I should find myself convicted of Error. But, though I make no inconsiderable Figure
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in those marginal Notes, by which you have swelled the Bulk, and encreased the Price, of your Book; I have not been able to discover any thing of that Sort; but see a great deal of something else which wou'd much better have been spared.

THE Point upon which we at first set out was a Question of Fact; whether the People of the Jews before the Captivity (or thereabouts) *were* or were *not*, acquainted with the Doctrine of a future State. You had maintained the Negative; and from hence undertaken to raise an *internal* Proof (DEMONSTRATION you are pleased to call it) that the Jews were under an extraordinary Providence, and that Moses's Legation was divine. There is nothing new in the Notion; but this USE, is your own, and would have been acceptable to Believers, if it had had ground to stand upon. But your Principle appeared to me to be false; and being fully convinced that Arguments built upon false Principles, if they do no hurt (which generally they do) can add no real Strength to Christianity I therefore

therefore opposed it, in a * Pamphlet published in the Year 1744. in which I endeavoured to prove from both the old and new Testament, that the Doctrine of a future State, was the constant belief of the People of God from the beginning, through every Age or Period of the Jewish Church. You never thought fit to enter into a regular Confutation of this Book; but shuffled it off as well as you could by scurrilous abusive Papers; and whoever will examine this new Edition, and see how little you have *now* done towards invalidating any part of my Argument, or establishing your own; he will perhaps be of opinion, that this Point has been driven as far as it will go; and that it will much better become us both, to sit down, each contented with his own Notions, than to trouble the World with Altercations, which can produce no good Effect. To this Issue I am willing to trust.

BUT there is one point (well worth Attention) which has not yet been de-
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bated,

* *An Examination of Mr. Warburton's Second Proposition, &c.*

bated, and which shall be the Subject of this Letter: The point I mean is, whether supposing it could be made out that the People of the Jews knew nothing of a future State, your Argument from thence is worth the Stir you have made about it; and whether you have not neglected a True, (and the principal) internal Proof of Moses's Mission to follow a Phantom of your own raising. As this Question affects not your Principle, but it's Use; it will be much more properly spoken to now, than when I was examining the Principle itself. Yet I gave you a hint of it at the * Close of that debate; in answer to which you now tell me (in your *civil* Way) that "I only shew
 " MY IGNORANCE of what is meant
 " by an INTERNAL Argument," †
 " which (you say) " is such a one as
 " takes for its Medium some NOTORI-
 " OUS FACT ALLOWED even by Unbe-
 " lievers." We are much beholden to you, that you will *at last* tell us what
 YOU

* History of Abraham, p. 81.

† D. L. Vol. 2. Par. 2. p. 136.

YOU mean by an *internal* Argument.
 I find nothing of it Vol. 1. B. 1. Sect.
 1. where it would most properly have
 been placed. The reason perhaps may
 be, that if you had said this at your
 first setting out it would have discredit-
 ed your whole Performance. For is it
 a Fact NOTORIOUS and allowed even
 by Unbelievers, that the Jews knew
 nothing of a future State? It is more
 than I know.----But if it is; to what
 purpose was it to take so much Pains
 to prove it? For whose use was that
 labour'd up-hill Work (which takes up
 so much room in your Second Volume)
 intended? For Believers? They want
 it not; they thank you not. For Un-
 believers? They are in possession (you
 say) of the very point you would prove?
 But how came a Man of your Discern-
 ment Mr. Dean, to fall into so weak
 a mistake as to think that *internal* Evi-
 dence takes its denomination from its being
 raised upon a Fact or Facts acknowledged
 by the Opposers themselves? What has
 this Circumstance to do with the *Nature*
 of Evidence whether *internal* or *external*?
 It may be of some use to stop the
 Mouth

Mouth of an opposer to say, *you have granted* this or that; for in all matters of Contest, a Man's own Concession lays hold of his Modesty, and will be a check upon him not to contradict a Verdict given by himself. But whether this be the Effect or not, the Evidence both in *Kind* and *Nature* will be the same. Let us then lay aside this trifling, and try if we can fix upon some intelligible Notion of *external* and *internal* Proof, that we may know what it is that we are talking about; and in order to it I lay down the following Propositions.

I. ANCIENT Facts are known by Historical Evidence; that is by the Testimony of the Historian who records them; supposing him duly qualified to be an Evidence.

II. To qualify a Man to be an Evidence it is necessary that he be a Person of Veracity, and that he himself be competently instructed in the Matters about which he writes.

III. IN order to such competent Instruction, it is necessary either that he himself had personal Knowledge of the Facts he records; or that he received them

them elsewhere upon such Evidence as might be depended upon. In the first of which cases he is an *Original*, in the latter a *Secondary* Witness; which (in many Cases) may be equivalent.

IV. UNDER these Circumstances all ancient Histories demand Credit, provided we are assured that they are really ancient Histories, and not modern Forgeries; the proper Evidence of which is, the concurrent Testimony of Ages, accepting and admitting such records as true and genuine from the very time in which they were written.

ALL these Circumstances concur to support the Authority of Moses's History, and of many other Histories; and these being *extraneous* to the Facts recorded, are what we call the *external* Proof. But there is in all Histories something *inherent* in the Facts themselves, which will make them more or less credible; and from hence arises what we call the *internal* Evidence. If an Historian relates things in the Nature of them impossible or absurd; no body will believe him, how well
soever

soever such History may, (in appearance) *externally* be supported: For it will be presumed (as it ought to be presumed) that there is some Defect in the *external* Evidence, though we may not be able to discover where it lies. The Case will be the same if an Historian reports inconsistent Facts, or things which do not well hang together, for in *Truth* there must be *Consistency*. But on the contrary when a History contains nothing impossible or absurd, and such an Harmony and Uniformity runs through the whole as gives it, what we call an Air of Credibility, we readily embrace it; and more or less strongly we embrace it in proportion, as this Air of Credibility is greater or less. But why do we embrace it? Not merely on the Account of this Uniformity, but because it is an uniform, consistent History, PROPERLY SUPPORTED by *external* Testimony: That is to say; this Uniformity is not (strictly) EVIDENCE of the Truth of the Facts, but prepares the Mind to receive the Evidence under the greater Advantage. It is this that distinguishes History from Romance.

Romance. The Writer of a Novel, if he understands his Business, will avoid Absurdities, and see that the several Parts of his Tale hang well together. But no body *therefore* believes it to be true; because it wants the Support of external Testimony, which the Writer cannot give nor pretends to give.

If this be not the true Nature of external and internal Proof, I do then freely confess that I know not what they mean. But this admitted, it will appear that the internal Evidence presupposes the external as its Foundation, and cannot subsist without it.

AND now, Sir, if you please, to the matter in hand.

You say that the Ignorance of a future State among the Jews is an internal, demonstrative Proof of Moses's divine Legation, or that the Jews were under an extraordinary Providence. In order to support this Argument, these things (at least) are necessarily presupposed, viz.---That Moses was the Legislator of the Jews; and---that the Jews were ignorant of a future State. But these Facts must be known by His-

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tory;

tory; which spoils you for a Demonstrator at once: For Historical Evidence goes no farther than Probability; and if this must concur to make up the Evidence, it cannot be a Demonstration; for Demonstration cannot stand upon Probability. This is impossible. The Evidence may be good and sufficient, but DEMONSTRATION it cannot be; which is always founded upon Self-evident Truths, and is carried on by a Chain or Series of the most simple Ideas hanging upon each other by a necessary Connexion.

BUT not to insist rigorously upon the meaning of Words, I will be content, if from the Ignorance of a future State among the Jews (which, for Argument Sake, is now granted you) you can form a better Argument for Moses's divine Legation, than we have without it. Your Argument stands thus-----The belief of a future State, in the ordinary Course of things, is necessary to support Government-----the Jews did not believe a future State, and yet were under Government.-----Therefore they were under
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an extraordinary Providence. But do you not see that your Argument entirely throws out (that is, omits) the CONCURRENCE OF HISTORY, which (as appears by the Observations just now laid down) is an essential Defect? The History, no doubt, was in your Head; but it should have been in your Argument too, or it comes to nothing. Let it be supposed that we knew nothing more of the Jews and their Government under Moses than this, that they did not believe a future State; would you immediately have inferred from hence that Judea was a land of Miracles? You *have* inferred it, but (in my opinion) very unsafely. For (to omit, at present, other Reasons,) though it is certain that the belief of a future State is so highly useful to Government that (in a qualified Sense) it may be termed NECESSARY; yet I do not see such a close Connexion between the Idea of such belief and the Idea of Government, as to think that the latter absolutely and inseparably involves the former. There is Government among bands of Thieves and Pirates, who,

if they believe a future State, make no use of it. And though it may be hard to conceive how Nations can subsist (or at least long subsist) without such a Belief; yet I will not go so far as to say that the thing is in the very notion of it, naturally IMPOSSIBLE. But if authentick History tells you of a Nation that did not believe a future State, and the same (or any other good) History informs you that they were under an extraordinary Providence; it may then be said that the History is thus far, consistent and uniform, and you may lay any Weight upon this Uniformity, in aid of the History, that it will, in reason, bear.

THERE is a Person who did you much Honour (which you have ill repaid) at your first setting out upon this Subject, who would have instructed you better in the manner of forming your Argument, if you had attended to him; I mean Dr. Sherlock, the present Bishop of London; who, in his Dissertation on Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, from this Circumstance in the Law of Moses that the Jews were forbidden to use Horses
and

and Chariots in War, raises an Argument to shew that it was from God. I have often thought with myself, that this gave you the first hint to attempt the like from the Ignorance of the Jews concerning a future State; but if this is true, you have shewn yourself a bad Copyist from a very great Master. For how does he form his Argument? Thus----“ The
 “ Law given to the Kings of Israel,
 “ CONSIDERED TOGETHER WITH THE
 “ HISTORY of that Nation, form a very
 “ strong Presumption for the divine Ori-
 “ ginal of the Law of Moses. *” You see here that his Lordship has taken care of the essential point, which you have neglected, the CONCURRENCE OF THE HISTORY with the Law; and from both together raises his Proof; which he does not call DEMONSTRATION but PRESUMPTION. And he had reason to call it so. For certainly if Moses was raised up to carry the Israelites out of Egypt into the Land of Canaan;
 to

* Dissert. 4. p. 24. 1st. Edit. 1732.

to dispossess Nations *greater and mightier than they*, * and place them in their stead; and if it be true that they did, under the Conduct of this their Leader, or his Successor, dispossess these Nations, notwithstanding that they were forbidden the natural and necessary means of Defence: If, I say, this be true, it will follow that the Hand of God was in this Thing. But this must APPEAR by the EVIDENCE which is the AUTHORITY of the History declaring both the Fact and the Divine Power by which it was effected; which creates a Consistency and Correspondency that gives Credit to the History; and without which nothing will arise but this Alternative, EITHER that Moses had the Assistance of an extraordinary Providence, OR that the History is NOT TRUE; and upon this Foot, I believe there is not a Man of common Sense who would not chuse the latter.

THIS Argument may be stated in a general Way; and in this Light it stands

* Deut. 4. 38.

stands in the HINT I gave you at the Close of our Debate. My Words are these:

“WHAT was it that Moses undertook and what was the true end of his Mission? It was to carry the Children of Israel out of Egypt and put them in possession of the Land of Canaan, in execution of the Covenant made with Abraham. The work in the very nature of it REQUIRED the Administration of an extraordinary Providence, of which it ought therefore to be presumed that Moses had the Assurance and Experience, otherwise he would have engaged in a very mad undertaking, and the People would have been as mad in following him.” * I have not here mentioned the Law forbidding the Use of Chariots and Horses; nor ought the Argument to be confined to it. It extends to all Cases of a like Sort; and if you take the whole History of Moses

* Hist. Abr. justified p. 81. 82,

Moses from his calling the Israelites to their Settlement in Canaan, you will find a Variety of Transactions which, natural Means only consider'd, appear to be absurd or impossible; and which, consequently (by the same Right that you claim in your Argument) will stand as so many internal Proofs of Moses's divine Mission. But this Argument (you say) is "a counterfeit piece of Trumpery, and so far from being an *internal* Argument that it is no Argument at all." In points of mere reasoning it is scarce allowable, to call in Authorities, unless it be to shame those who obstinately hold out against Conviction. But upon this occasion I cannot help telling you that there is ONE Author at least, who vouches for this Argument. The Authority you cannot except against; for it is YOUR OWN. The Passage lies at present close in a Corner where it has little to do; but I will set it (as it is fit) in open day-light.

IN the first part of this second Volume you attack Sir ISAAC NEWTON,
upon

upon the point of the high Antiquity of Egypt. In the management of this Argument you was led to take Notice of that very Law of Moses, by which the Israelites were forbidden the use of Horses and Chariots in War; and, as it is much your Custom, to catch at every new Scent, whether to your purpose or not; you undertake to assign the reasons of this Law. Of *three* that you have assigned, I shall take Notice only of the last, which runs in these Words.

“ THE third reason of the Prohibition
 “ was evidently to afford a LASTING
 “ MANIFESTATION of that EXTRA-
 “ ORDINARY Providence, by which the
 “ Israelites were conducted into the
 “ Land of Canaan.-----When once
 “ settled they might very well defend their
 “ Possession without the help of Caval-
 “ ry. But to conquer it without Ca-
 “ valry, and from a War-like People
 “ abounding in Horse, WAS MORE
 “ THAN A RAW UNPRACTISED IN-
 “ FANTRY COULD EVER HAVE PER-
 “ FORMED ALONE.” And a little af-
 “ ter-----“ The Invaders of a Country
 “ where Cavalry is in use, go to certain
 C “ Destruction,

“ Destruction, without a Body of Horse
 “ to support their Infantry. This then
 “ being the very Situation of Affairs
 “ when the Israelites invaded Canaan
 “ and conquered it.-----I CONCLUDE
 “ that they MUST HAVE BEEN MIRA-
 “ CULOUSLY ASSISTED.” * Shew me
 a Difference, Mr. Dean, between the
 two Arguments, or tell me how it
 comes to pass that the same Argument
 which was so good in your Hands,
 should be such Trumpery in mine.
 What new light (or rather darkness)
 has broken in upon you to set the
 second Part of your Work at Variance
 with the first? The Account of this
 must be something very curious, and
 the Reader shall have it from your-
 self.

ONE reason then why you cannot ac-
 cept my (i. e. *your own*) Argument, it
 seems, is this, that “ it will serve the
 “ Mufti full as well to prove the divine
 “ Legation of Mahomet.”-----Very
 well Mr. Dean! And was it not as
 easy

* D. L. Vol. 2. Part. 1. pag. 291. &c. new
 Edition.

easy for you to have seen this before as to see it now?-----But let us hear you out-----“ for thus we may suppose he “ (the Musti) would argue-----Ma- “ homet’s Work was not like Moses’s “ the Subdual of a small Tract of “ Country, possessed by seven Tribes or “ Nations, with a force of some hun- “ dred thousand followers; but the Con- “ quest of almost all Asia with a hand- “ ful of Banditti. Now this Work “ (says the learned Mahometan) in the “ very Nature of it required the Admi- “ nistration of an extraordinary Provi- “ dence, of which it ought therefore “ to be presumed that Mahomet had “ both the Assurance and Experience, “ otherwise he would have engaged in “ a very mad undertaking, and the Peo- “ ple would have been as mad in fol- “ lowing him. Thus has the learned “ Doctor taught the Musti how to rea- “ son.”-----So you Mr. Dean!----- But I am afraid that *here* you want help yourself; and angry as you are with me, I had much rather do you a good Office than the Musti, with whom I neither have, nor desire to have,

any Acquaintance. Pray then consider a little; is there no Difference between these two Cases? Whilst you was commenting upon the Law against Chariots and Horses you could see a very plain one and have distinctly marked it out. For you say, (and very truly) that “Mahomet never pretended to make his Conquests without Horse, but used them on every occasion of need.” This is to the point, Sir; and if ever you should chance to meet the Mufti (which you are much more likely to do than I am) pray tell him THIS; and it will cure him of his haranguing at once. But by all Means conceal from him, with a religious Secresy, what you have published here with so little Ceremony, viz. that “Mahomets Work was not like Moses’s the Subdual of a SMALL TRACT of Country----- with a Force of some HUNDRED THOUSAND Followers, but the Conquest of almost ALL ASIA with a HANDFUL of Banditti;” for this will be understood as a Concession (perhaps) that Mahomet had even GREATER Pretensions to a divine Legation than Moses

ses. For thus the Construction lies-----
 Mahomet did a *greater* Work than Mo-
 ses *with less natural help*.-----If it is
not this; it is nothing. If it *is* this;
 it is a monstrous Fallacy. Let us try
 a little Mr. Dean, if we cannot set
 this point (which alike concerns us
 both) upon a right Foot. Which of
 these Leader's Moses or Mahomet had
 the greatest Number of Followers, or
 which of them subdued the largest Tract
 of Country, is nothing to the Purpose,
 and therefore not worth examining.
 The single point is, *how* or *by what In-*
struments each of them did his Work.
 Mahomet did it by the natural and or-
 dinary Methods of Conquest; by Armies
 of Horse and Foot. Did Moses do so
 too? Prove this, and you will conquer
 me and yourself too; for you have said
 that he had them NOT, and that with-
 out a MIRACULOUS Assistance the Con-
 quest of Canaan would have been IM-
 POSSIBLE. With what Consistency
 then could you put it into the Mouth
 of your Mahometan to say, that Maho-
 mets Work, in the *very Nature* of it
 required the Administration of an ex-
 traordinary

traordinary Providence? The *Nature* of every Work is to be estimated by the Circumstances that attend it. Moses's Work was so circumstanced, that without an extraordinary Providence he could not have effected it; Mahomet's so, that without an extraordinary Providence, he might and did effect it!

II. ANOTHER reason why you cannot accept my Argument is "because you
 " proposed to PROVE (not to PRESUME
 " upon) the Divinity of Moses's Mis-
 " sion."-----What an unreasonable
 Man are you Mr. Dean! Would you
 have more of a Thing than is in it?
 I say that the Circumstances under
 which the Israelites were, is a Presump-
 tion that Moses had an extraordinary
 Assistance; and so it is. But am I
 therefore to be charged with leaving the
 whole Weight of Moses's Authority to
 rest upon Presumption? Absurd! The
 Presumption refers to the History and
 the Circumstance from whence it arises,
 falling in with the History, they mu-
 tually confirm and strengthen each other,
 and make the Evidence full and com-
 plet. The Nature of the Work leads
 you

you to expect a miraculous Assistance; and the History shews it you.

ENOUGH has been said upon this Argument: And now Mr. Dean, it may be time to weigh the Value of yours; which is an Argument of the same kind, and concludes exactly in the same Way. I consider the Work of Moses in general as above the Power of natural Means, and from thence conclude that he had Supernatural Assistance. You consider the Doctrine of a future State as a natural Means, and from the want of it draw the same Conclusion. What now is your boasted DEMONSTRATION come to? Why to a *Presumptive* Proof only, and that, in its Force, inferior to the other. For it is not at least so clear a Point, that the belief of a future State is essential to Government, as it is that Horses and Chariots are necessary in War; or if it were as clear, and nothing had been recorded concerning an extraordinary Providence, I should have been as much at Liberty to deny the Truth of the History, as you are to infer Moses's divine Legation. It may farther be observed

served in disparagement of your Argument that the Premises and the Conclusion do not tally well together: For the Conclusion should have been, not simply, that the Jews were under an extraordinary Providence, but, that they were under *SUCH* an extraordinary Providence as fully supplied the want of a future State, i. e. a Providence *EXACTLY EQUAL*. But *SUCH* a Providence never subsisted in this World nor ever can subsist, the Constitution of Things remaining the same.-----But take it as you like best; and let it be said that you have gained *one* Congruity, *one* Correspondency, to be added to the many that the History may justly challenge; how much are you a gainer by it? Rate the Advantage as high as you please; it can never compensate for introducing or patronizing an Opinion which gives such an Account of God's Conduct in relation to his chosen People as will not stand with common Sense. This was urged upon you in my Examination and has been fully supported in my Defence of it; of which you take no Notice. That I may not
seem

seem singular in this Opinion, I will give you the Sense of an able Divine of our Church who says-----“ Some have carried the Point so high, as to make the Promises and Expectations of a future happy State peculiar to the Gospel; thus excluding all before and under the Law, from any Revelation or Belief of that kind. But this is, doubtless, a very ERRONEOUS and DANGEROUS Doctrine; highly injurious to the Goodness and Wisdom of God, a great Indignity to the Moral Dispensation, altogether inconsistent, with the whole Tenor and Design of the old, as we find it interpreted and confirmed by the new, Testament.” Dean Stanhope’s Boyle’s Lectur. Sermon. 6.

THIS Gentleman may perhaps be too orthodox for you, and will be turned aside among the the Croud of Bigots; for, according to the Fashion of the Scoffers of the Age, Orthodoxy is a standing Jest with you, and all are Bigots who are not of your Opinion. By what Right is it that as soon as a Man begins to fancy himself wiser than the rest of

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the World, he sets up his own Judgment as the Standard of Sense?

Homine imperito nunquam quidquam injustius!

But I will name you a Man who certainly was not over-orthodox; I mean your old Friend and Intimate Dr. Middleton, who, acquiescing in your Principle that the ancient Jews knew nothing of a future State, saw (or thought he saw) that, in it's Consequence, it destroyed the Foundation of all Religion among that People, and rather than accept your Argument chose to mark out Moses for a Fool, * as
YOU

* “ I should be glad to hear that your great Work
“ goes on successfully.-----When I was last in
“ London I met with a little Piece, written-----on
“ the same Plan with yours, an anonymous Letter
“ from Geneva evincing the divine Mission of Mo-
“ ses from the Institution of the Sabbatic Year.
“ The Author sets out, like you, from this single
“ Postulatum, that Moses was a consummate Law-
“ giver; and shews that he could never have en-
“ joyed a Law, so whimsical, impolitick, and ha-
“ zardous-----if he who has all Nature at Com-
“ mand, had not warranted the Success of it-----
“ But will not this Gaiety of censuring the Law be
“ found too adventurous-----especially when there
“ is a Fact generally allowed by the learned, that
“ seems to overturn all this specious Reasoning at
“ once,

you might have done for any good reason you have given to the contrary. You may tell us as often as you please that it was contrived to do Honour to Moses's Legation; and I shall as readily

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believe

“ once, viz. That this Law of the Sabbatic Year
 “ was never observed. For if so it may be objected
 “ with some Shew of Reason, that Moses had
 “ charged himself with the Issue of Events TOO
 “ DELICATE AND BEYOND HIS REACH, and IMPRUDENTLY
 “ enjoyed what use and Experience
 “ shewed to be IMPRACTICABLE. I am apprehensive
 “ likewise that your Work will not
 “ stand wholly clear of Objections. Your
 “ Scheme, as I take it is to shew that so able a
 “ Man as Moses could not possibly have omitted
 “ the Doctrine of a future State-----had he not
 “ done it by the express Direction of the Deity.
 “ But what was the Consequence? Why the People
 “ were perpetually apostatizing-----and tired
 “ with the load of their Ceremonies-----funk into
 “ all kinds of Vice and Profaneness; till the Prophets,
 “ in order to revive---a Sense of Religion---began to preach up the rational Duties of
 “ Religion and insinuate the Doctrine of a future
 “ State.

“ As in the other Case then some may be apt to
 “ say that Moses had instituted what could not
 “ be practised without Ruin to the State; so in
 “ this, that he had overlooked, what COULD NOT
 “ BE OMITTED, WITHOUT RUIN TO RELIGION.” Middleton's Miscellaneous Tracts. Vol.
 1. Letter to Warburton. 1.

believe you, as if you should say it was contrived for YOUR Honour that you might have the Opportunity of raising a DEMONSTRATION which no body ever saw before you nor will be able to see after you.

How is it then (I ask again) that you are serving Religion? Why just as a Physician is serving his Patient, who, in order to remove a Pain in his Toe, applies such Remedies as will drive the Distemper up into his Brain! But this Difficulty is clearly avoided by the old Exposition; which gives to the People of Israel, *both* an extraordinary Providence *and* the Knowledge of a future State, (and surely! they are both consistent) the one as the principal and adequate Foundation of their Religion, and the other as the Cement of their civil Polity, and the Instrument of putting them in Possession of the Land of Canaan, and keeping them together as a People separated from the rest of the Nations, till the Time fore-ordained in God's Wisdom for the gathering together all Nations into one People under Christ the Redeemer, should come.

This

This is the OLD Doctrine which runs through both Testaments, and which is supported by the Articles and Homilies of our Church; as I have largely proved in my Examination, by Arguments which you have thought fit to neglect, and which I shall not repeat: Nor had I said thus much but to give to every intelligent Reader, a short and clear Account of the true State and Merits of this Question; and to shew how much the Interest of Religion is concerned in it. And you Mr. Dean, if you please, may learn from hence a very useful Lesson, which is to abate something of your critical Pride and Insolence, and to be more ready to make Allowances for the Mistakes of others, since you so much want Allowance for your own.

Whether you will vouchsafe to read this Letter, or I am to be committed to your learned Friend who * *reads for*
you

* “ I applied to a learned Person, who, in Consideration of our Friendship, has been prevailed upon to undergo the Drudgery of turning over this DIRTY HEAP [the Writings of ALL his Opposers;-----*Bigots, Hutchinsonians, Methodists, Answerers, Free-thinkers, and Fanaticks.*] “ and
“ marking

you; I am contented should be as your Sovereign Will and Pleasure shall direct. It seems (however) to come to you not unseasonably whilst you are preparing your third Volume, in which you propose to remove *all conceivable Objections against your Conclusion, and to throw in every collateral Light upon the Premises.* * You may save yourself this Trouble. For write as many Volumes as you please, you will make no more of the Argument than you have made of it already; and as your Foundation is bad, the more you load the faster will your Building fall.

BUT you have a fancy that the Publick will be † *disappointed* if you should
not

“ marking down what he imagined would in the
“ least deserve, or could justify any Notice: For
“ I would not have the Reader conceive so miser-
“ ably of me as to think I was EVER DISPOSED
“ TO LOOK INTO THEM MYSELF.” D. L. Vol.
2. p. 1. in the Preface p. 40. This may be
true; and the Work well enough agrees with it.
But I believe there is not a Man living, except
himself, who could have had Assurance enough to
have said it, and boasted of it.

* Par. p. 2. 254.

† Dedication, p. 19.

not publish this third Volume which has been so long promised; and, to say the Truth, you are so much beholden to the Publick, that you ought not to disappoint them in any thing that is reasonable for them to expect. But consider, Sir, that there may be some hazard in indulging the publick Curiosity too far; which generally *rises* in proportion as what they expect approaches nearer to an Impossibility. It is not long since the whole Town was alarmed to see a Man creep into a Quart Bottle. The Day was fixed, and a great Concourse of People met together, who finding themselves cheated, pulled the Projectors House about his Ears. The Fact is notorious: You may make what use of it you please.

And thus, Mr. Dean, I take leave of you; *When* or *where* to meet again I know not. We move at present in different Spheres. I love to creep upon the Ground, and to keep the common Path, howsoever unnoticed. You affect the airy Regions; and nothing will content you but “ to go down to Posterity
“ and to live in the Voice and Memory
“ of

“ of Men.” * But take heed that you do not mistake your Way; lest some shameful Fall awakens you from your *flattering Dream*, and you be found lurking at the bottom of a Band-Box, or in the Shop of some Country Retailer

-----*Vendentis thus & odores,
Et piper aut quicquid Chartis amicitur
ineptis.*

THERE, Mr. Dean, I may, at some Time or other, possibly fall in with you; and till then-----FAREWEL.

HENRY STEBBING.

Bath,
October, 18, 1758.

* Dedication, p. 4.

F I N I S.



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